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LETTER DATED 26 JULY 1995 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the grave situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular to recent events concerning the safe areas proclaimed by the Security Council in that country. I should like to inform you, and through you the members of the Council, that I have decided to extend my support to the decisions taken by the North Atlantic Council on 25 July 1995 relating to the use of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air power to deter Bosnian Serb attacks on Gorazde. I agree with NATO that an attack by the Bosnian Serbs on Gorazde should be met by a firm and decisive response, including through air strikes.

As you are aware, the relevant Security Council resolutions call for close coordination between the United Nations and NATO on the use of NATO air power. These "duel-key" arrangements remain in place. In order to streamline decision-making within the United Nations chain of command when air strikes are deemed to be necessary, I have decided to delegate the necessary authority in this respect to the Force Commander of the United Nations Peace Forces with immediate effect. As regards close air support to defend United Nations peace-keepers, my Special Representative has today delegated the necessary authority to the Force Commander, who is authorized to delegate it further to the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) when operational circumstances so require.

I remain deeply concerned by current attacks on Sarajevo and on the Bihac pocket and note that the North Atlantic Council has asked the NATO military authorities, in consultation with the United Nations Peace Forces, to formulate proposals on the possible use of air power in these situations also. I am accordingly instructing the United Nations commanders in the field to undertake the necessary planning, in consultation with NATO.

I should like to stress that the above measures are all being taken with a view to implementing existing Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 836 (1993), and are consistent with that resolution.

I have today informed the troop-contributing countries of the measures that I am taking. I have already issued instructions to my Special Representative to take all measures necessary to protect United Nations personnel in the theatre and to reduce their vulnerability to retaliation and hostage-taking.

I am sure you will join me in welcoming the commitment of the North Atlantic Alliance to support the United Nations in the implementation of Security Council resolutions. In furtherance of the cooperation between our two organizations, I have today instructed the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Force Commander, General Bernard Janvier, to travel to Brussels for consultations with NATO on the operational modalities for implementing the measures that I have agreed with NATO.

It is my hope that the joint efforts of the United Nations and NATO will serve to fulfil the international community's objective of a peaceful and durable settlement of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I should be grateful if you could bring these matters to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI